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Education Committee
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Education Committee Public Hearing Testimony

RE: H.B. No. 5078 (COMM)

AN ACT IMPOSING A MORATORIUM ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS.

Chairman Fleischmann
Chairman Stillman
Ranking Member Ackert
Ranking Member Boucher
and Education Committee Membership

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding HB 5078.

As you are aware, many parents, teachers and administrators object to the burgeoning government education “standards” racket, which usurps local control, undermines family privacy, and debatably impedes academic achievement. Many parents, in particular, are alarmed about the "common core" curriculum currently being instituted in school systems across the nation, with grave concerns about Common Core's invasive nature.

Common Core is inextricably tied to the big business of data collection and data mining. States must now comply with the requirements of two private testing conglomerates, either the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, or the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. Both the Education and Labor Departments have funded several other initiatives to build various interoperable student and teacher databases. Common Core states also agreed to expand existing statewide database systems that contain sensitive student data from pre-kindergarten through postsecondary education.

According to the Homeschool Legal Defense Association, "a ‘national database’ is being created in which every public school student’s personal information and academic history will be stored... It will become increasingly difficult to protect the personal information of homeschool and private school students as these databases grow.” This is no laughing matter.

Furthermore, SafeGov.org, a computer privacy watchdog group, recently reported that Google has admitted in court filings that “it data mines student emails for ad-targeting purposes outside of school, even when ad serving in school is turned off.” The newly exposed court documents confirm that even when ad serving is turned off in Google Apps for Education (GAFE), the contents of users’ emails are still being scanned by Google in order to target ads at those same users when they use the web outside of

GAFE -- for example, when watching a YouTube video, conducting a Google search, or viewing a web page that contains a Google or DoubleClick cookie. According to SafeGov, Google is building brand loyalty through GAFE, essentially turning teachers into tax-subsidized lobbyists for the company.

In New York, opposition from both sides of the political spectrum has forced education bureaucrats to delay uploading personally identifiable student information to the Common Core-linked inBloom data cloud (itself a partnership of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Rupert Murdoch's News Corp).

In Jefferson County, Colorado, families from both sides of the political aisle forced the district to withdraw from a meddling inBloom pilot project adopted without parental consent.

The exploding multibillion-dollar education technology sector is driven by Common Core's top-down digital learning and testing mandates. Under the Obama administration, huge loopholes in the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act have opened data mining of students' personally identifiable information to third-party private entities -- Social Security numbers, disciplinary records, biometric data, etc.

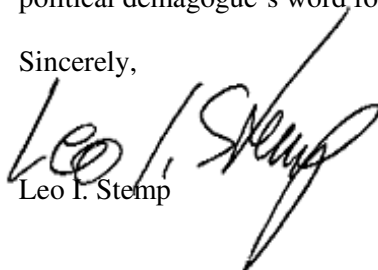
Regarding the Common Core-driven data collection, we parents want to know:

- For what EXACT purpose will this sensitive data be utilized?
- What organizations will have access to identifiable academic records? Other than generic information regarding race, age, gender and geographic location, why does the federal database require identifiable information to be accessible?
- If the political responses to these questions are 'all information contained in the database is unidentifiable and security stored,' then why were changes made to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act to allow an exemption to educational privacy rights when it comes to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards?

As a resident whose taxes pay for the operation of the school system in East Granby, I would like to know if the Education Committee and our school Boards and administrators have the answers to those questions - and if not, why not, and how are the security of our children's private information being ensured.

Parents have been called "paranoid" about Common Core. I would suggest to you that "paranoid" is the political demagogue's word for active, alert and well-informed.

Sincerely,



Leo I. Stemp